

FW: CLIPS - TorStar - Citizens group wins court-ordered freeze of Freedom Convoy accounts, cryptocurrency

From: "Lawrence, Alex" <[Personal Info.]>
To: "Nathoo, Farees" <[Personal Info.]>, "Vaupshas, Adrienne" <adrienne.vaupshas@fin.gc.ca>
Date: Fri, 18 Feb 2022 14:02:23 +0000

I don't know what to say about this.

Alex Lawrence
Directeur des communications | Director of Communications
Cabinet de la Vice-première ministre et ministre des Finances | Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
[Personal Info.]

From: Freeland, Honourable/Honorable Chrystia <[Personal Info.]>
Sent: Thursday, February 17, 2022 11:47 PM
To: Lawrence, Alex <[Personal Info.]>; Leslie Church <Leslie.Church@fin.gc.ca>; Michael Sabia <michael.sabia@fin.gc.ca>
Subject: Fwd: CLIPS - TorStar - Citizens group wins court-ordered freeze of Freedom Convoy accounts, cryptocurrency

We will need to answer a few questions about this -
Why could private citizens do what the govt was unable to do?
If private citizens are able to do this, why did we need the Emergencies Act?
Are we acting too slowly?
C

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Lawrence, Alex" <[Personal Info.]>
Date: February 17, 2022 at 11:08:48 PM EST
To: "Freeland, Honourable/Honorable Chrystia" <[Personal Info.]>
Subject: FW: CLIPS - TorStar - Citizens group wins court-ordered freeze of Freedom Convoy accounts, cryptocurrency

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[Personal Info.]

From: Bartsoff, Jesse <jesse.bartsoff@fin.gc.ca>
Sent: Thursday, February 17, 2022 10:20 PM
To: Freeland, Honourable/Honorable Chrystia <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Vaupshas, Adrienne <Adrienne.Vaupshas@fin.gc.ca>; Lawrence, Alex <[REDACTED]>; Wozny, Alexander <Alexander.Wozny@fin.gc.ca>; Kropman, Alexann <alexann.kropman@fin.gc.ca>; Laporte, Anthony <Anthony.Laporte@fin.gc.ca>; Bertrand, Guillaume <Guillaume.Bertrand@fin.gc.ca>; Sambasivam, Bud <[REDACTED]>; McNeill, Cameron <Cameron.McNeill@fin.gc.ca>; Sarault, Cédric <Cedric.Sarault@fin.gc.ca>; Labelle, Daniel <daniel.labelle@fin.gc.ca>; Hurl, David <David.Hurl@fin.gc.ca>; Wong, Douglas <Douglas.Wong@fin.gc.ca>; Nathoo, Farees <[REDACTED]>; Richardson, Galen <Galen.Richardson@fin.gc.ca>; Tatone, Gianluca <Gianluca.Tatone@fin.gc.ca>; Hall, Mathew <Mathew.Hall@fin.gc.ca>; Wilson, Hannah <hannah.wilson@fin.gc.ca>; Bartsoff, Jesse <jesse.bartsoff@fin.gc.ca>; Eritou, Jessica <jessica.eritou@fin.gc.ca>; Arless, Joshua <Joshua.Arless@fin.gc.ca>; Church, Leslie <Leslie.Church@fin.gc.ca>; Yasin, Maaz <[REDACTED]>; McEachern, Malcolm <malcolm.mceachern@fin.gc.ca>; Paoli, Marco <[REDACTED]>; Brown, Mary-Rose <mary-rose.brown@fin.gc.ca>; Hopper, Miles <Miles.Hopper@fin.gc.ca>; Haidar, Nasser <Nasser.Haidar@fin.gc.ca>; Mahoney, Nicholas <nicholas.mahoney@fin.gc.ca>; Zimmerman, Shannon <[REDACTED]>; Lawlor, Shawn <[REDACTED]>; Meredith, Tyler <Tyler.Meredith@fin.gc.ca>; Nanda, Yash <Yash.Nanda@fin.gc.ca>
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TorStar - Citizens group wins court-ordered freeze of Freedom Convoy accounts, cryptocurrency

In an extraordinary hearing, an Ottawa judge freezes bank accounts and digital wallets with bitcoin and other currencies believed to hold more than \$1 million.

By Tonda MacCharles
Feb. 17, 2022, 10:15 pm

An Ottawa judge has frozen the bank accounts and digital “wallets” of convoy leaders believed to hold more than \$1 million in bitcoin and cryptocurrency after an extraordinary secret hearing.

Late Thursday, Ontario Superior Court Justice Calum MacLeod granted an injunction to a private citizens’ effort to stanch the flow of money that was a lifeline for the 21-day occupation of Ottawa.

MacLeod issued the sweeping order freezing all the digital assets and bank accounts of convoy leaders, several of whom are directors of a corporation they created three weeks ago.

He ordered any banks, financial institutions, money service businesses, fundraising platforms or websites, cryptocurrency exchanges or platforms, and

custodians of any cryptocurrency wallets to halt transactions related to the organizers' accounts and digital wallets.

And the institutions and platforms must disclose the assets held within to the court.

Lawyer Paul Champ, acting on behalf of a group of Ottawa residents who have launched a class-action lawsuit for damages caused by the protest, won the injunction during an unusual "ex-parte" hearing, held "in camera" — without public notice or access. The targeted defendants did not receive advance warning, nor did they have an opportunity to get a lawyer to court to contest the claims.

It was a calculated effort to halt the flow of funds after a private investigator and a bitcoin expert hired by Champ flagged that the "Freedom Convoy" organizers were moving cryptocurrency funds out of digital wallets and into new ones faster than the RCMP could keep up, and outpacing the federal government's efforts to track them, Champ said.

At last count, according to information in the court order, at least 146 different digital wallets were believed to be in play. Most were listed as containing bitcoin, but other digital currencies were also identified.

Champ, his co-counsel, and a group of Ottawa citizens have filed a broader class-action lawsuit seeking \$306 million in damages against the convoy organizers, but fear the ability to recover any reparations would be lost without the order. Champ is the same lawyer who won an injunction last week halting the trucks parked downtown from blaring their horns.

The federal government says it has been freezing accounts related to the convoy, under the Emergencies Act invoked Monday. But Champ said the government is moving too slowly.

"They keep moving to bitcoin and other shadowy fundraising platforms to avoid the reach of authorities," said Champ in an interview.

Justice MacLeod's order freezes all assets up to a value of \$20 million.

It says the individuals and the corporation are "restrained from directly or indirectly" selling or moving any of the assets or money around, and from instructing or compelling any other person to do so, and from facilitating or "aiding and abetting" any act that has the effect of moving the money and cryptocurrency beyond reach.

It targets the accounts of individuals, specifically Patrick King, Tamara Lich, Christopher Garrah, Nicholas St. Louis and Benjamin Dichter — all key players in the convoy.

The court order names a corporation called Freedom 2022 Human Rights and Freedoms that Champ said was set up Jan. 30 to collect money from GiveSendGo, the U.S.-based online platform that collected more than \$10.7 million in donations for what it said was food, fuel and shelter for convoy participants.

That flood of money poured in after another platform GoFundMe halted fundraising because of “police reports of violence and other unlawful activity” and said it would give more than \$10 million raised at that point to charity. It later agreed to return donations to donors.

Late Thursday night, as arrests of Lich and Chris Barber, a director of Freedom 2022 Human Rights and Freedoms, were being made on the streets of Ottawa, the targets of the order were being served notice of the court order via their lawyers.

The order is broad.

Within a week, the court says the defendants have to provide an affidavit declaring their worldwide assets “whether solely or jointly owned, which are being used, have been earmarked for, or are intended to be used to fund, directly or indirectly, activities associated with the Freedom Convoy protests in or around the City of Ottawa ... including but not limited to any digital assets (and any associated cryptocurrency wallet addresses),” it says.

If they refuse to do so, they could be facing a contempt-of-court charge, the judge says.

Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland told reporters earlier Thursday that an unspecified number of accounts related to the protests had already been frozen, but she would not say how many, citing operational concerns.

“The names of both individuals and entities as well as crypto wallets have been shared by the RCMP with financial institutions and accounts have been frozen, and more accounts will be frozen,” she said.

“We will have zero tolerance for the establishment of new blockades or occupations. We now have the tools to follow the money. We can see what is happening and what is being planned in real time and we are absolutely determined that this must end now and for good.”

She said online crowdfunding platforms and payment service providers “have started the registration process with (the federal financial intelligence agency) FINTRAC.

The federal government has not publicly spoken about its own analysis of the convoy’s fundraising totals.

But in documents justifying the declaration of a national emergency, the government cited a CBC analysis that showed 55 per cent of donations made public came from donors in the U.S compared to 39 per cent of donors located in Canada.